

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of North Carolina is currently in the final year of its Multi year Drug Control Strategic Plan. The primary impetus of the state plan is the reconfiguration of the Juvenile Justice System with a special emphasis being placed on prevention and intervention. Governor Hunt's Blue Ribbon Commission on Juvenile Crime and Justice was formed in September of 1997 to develop a comprehensive strategy to combat juvenile crime, substance abuse, and to strengthen penalties for violent and habitual offenders.

The Commission recommended forty-five distinct modifications to the juvenile justice code and juvenile program operations that would institute sweeping changes in the manner North Carolina would address the burgeoning juvenile crime epidemic. After extensive debate within legislative committees and numerous public forums, the North Carolina General Assembly met in early October to deliberate upon issues concerning funding and statutory language. Eventually, the North Carolina General Assembly voted to support the Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Initiative, which was introduced by Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. in the 1998 short session of the state legislature.

The major components of the legislation is:

- Movement to graduated sanctions and intensive supervision of nonviolent offenders.
- Most violent and repeat offenders to be tried in adult courts.
- Increase the number of training school beds to accommodate these offenders.
- Provide support for the development of programs designed to diminish violent behavior.
- Changes within the juvenile justice code that would place more responsibility on the families for their children's treatment and well-being.
- Address the treatment needs of chemically and alcohol-dependent juveniles.

In support of Governor Hunt's Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Initiative, The Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, under the stewardship of Secretary Richard H. Moore, has developed pilot programs within the community-based project titled "Communities That Care". This \$1 million comprehensive research-based prevention program is currently operational in ten North Carolina counties with plans to incorporate another six counties later this year.

The participation of community stakeholders has far exceeded expectations and pilot programs are making recommendations for prevention and intervention programs that will have a direct and immediate impact on the crime problems within their respective communities.

There was a philosophical and structural change in the manner which the Governor's Crime Commission recommends program funding priorities for the Edward Byrne Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program. The general committee structure changed almost in its entirety with the dismantling of the Corrections, Judicial, and Law Enforcement Committees. Those committees had traditionally sought to identify criminal justice system shortcomings and operational effectiveness projects based on each committee's priority considerations.

With the implementation of the sweeping changes instituted by the Governor, North Carolina has made dramatic progress on statewide criminal justice issues, by initiating far-reaching, proactive, comprehensive prevention and intervention approaches.

The Byrne committees under the new organizational structure are Drug Control and Substance Abuse, Juvenile Prevention, Juvenile Intervention, and Information Systems. They have recommended a variety of programs that go far